Irish Union

AN

# ADDRESS

TO THE

# *PEOPLE OF IRELAND;*

SHEWING THEM

WHY THEY OUGHT TO SUBMIT

TO AN

# *UNION.*

---

Of Comfort, no Man ſpeak; let's talk of Graves, of Worms, and Epitaphs.

SHAKE-PEARE.

---

DUBLIN:
PRINTED AND SOLD BY THE BOOK-SELLERS.

1799.

8146.bbb.23
1 – 5.

BRITISH MUSEUM

7

AN

# ADDRESS, &c.

COUNTRYMEN,

I HAVE ſeen with an indignation, ſuſpended by aſtoniſhment, the efforts which have been made uſe of to raiſe an oppoſition to the intended meaſure of an Union. I have attended with anxiety to what migh be the reſult of this oppoſition, and I have been convinced that on your part it will be impotent and injurious.

The period is a ſingular one, the events of the preſent year mock the calculations of the laſt, and where the revolution of the public mind will reſt, who will be daring enough to ſay, who would have been hardy enough to predict in 1798, that at the commencement of 1799, Parliament would oppoſe the meaſure of the Britiſh Miniſter? Who could have forſeen, and by whom would it have been believed, that patriotiſm, long ſuffering, much reviled, and much calumniated patriotiſm, driven from the Northern coaſt to ſeek refuge on the ſea-beaten wilds of the Weſt—purſued wherever it could be traced, by extermination—branded wherever it roſe, with infamy—and marked wherever it was met, for deſtruction. That ſpirit, againſt which every hand of power was raiſed, which like the troubled dove,

could find no place on which to fix its feet, on which to reſt its wing; ſhould ſeek and ſhould find a ſanctuary in the great chair of the Houſe of Commons, and animate the declamation of the oppoſition.

Accuſtomed as I have been to conſider Parliament not as the ſanctuary of patriotiſm, the adoption of the name does not bring conviction to my mind that they are animated by the ſpirit; and I warn my countrymen to beware of the deluſion. You are called on to oppoſe this Union, and to preſerve your rights. Now, I aſk the men who call on you, what right you have to ſupport? I aſk Parliament what right *they* have not wreſted from you? They adjure you to ſupport the Conſtitution. Alas! for that Conſtitution, originally a ſhadow, now embodied a ſubſtance of corruption. You are called upon to reſiſt, *what?* Not *oppreſſion*, it has been *protected*—Not *injuſtice*, it has been *legalized*—Not *cruelty*, it has been *indemnified*. You are called on to reſiſt an Union. You are called on to oppoſe an incorporation, by which you are to loſe—a name.

If I am to bend to the altar of Britiſh ſupremacy, if I am to wear the chains of everlaſting ſlavery, it matters not to me whether I wear them as an Iriſhman, or a Weſt Briton—It matters not to me, whether my fetters are forged in Eaſt or Weſt Britain: if I am to receive the eſſence, I will not war about the form in which it is preſented to me—If you had one right unalianated, I, too, would ſay to you, while the life blood flowed from my heart in defence of that right—never ſubmit to an Union—never, never, never.

But

But to retain what, are you to reſiſt this Union, to ſupport this Parliament? Is it to preſerve your Penal Code, that you are to reſiſt it? Is it for the ſuſpenſion of the Habeas Corpus Act? Is it for the Convention, the Inſurrection, and the Indemnity Acts, that you are to reſiſt the annihilation of the Parliament which paſſed them.—While thoſe bills ſtand recorded on their journals, Parliament ought to know, that the country cannot dread their extinction. And if the Miniſter of England wiſhes to uſe any argument, but military force, for the accompliſhment of this meaſure, let him preſent that ſtatute book to the people, and aſk them—Why ſhould you wiſh the duration of this Parliament? do you not feel that I am omnipotent in it? are not my mandates written *here in blood?*—Have you ever obtained one meaſure from your Iriſh Parliament, againſt my wiſhes?—Have not they, as I commanded, offered you conciliation, and given you perſecution—Have they not elated you with hope, but to cruſh you with diſappointment?—What have you then to dread from an Engliſh Parliament, which you have not ſuffered from your own? People! ſubmit, when you cannot reſiſt; and after all that you have borne, repine not at the conſummation of your fate.

If the Parliament meant fairly by the People, if they wiſhed to gain their confidence, or to deſerve it, they would expunge from their records thoſe acts which muſt for ever blaſt confidence, and deſtroy hope—They would ſay to the People, Country-

men, we are men, and we are weak—We have injured you, moſt deeply, moſt fatally—We were placed here to protect; and we have deſtroyed you; but we will repair that injury, we will revoke that deſtruction—We here repeal, in the face of our country, that code which the barbarous prejudices of our anceſtors inſtituted—We repeal too, that code, which our own ſanguinary policy framed—We return into your hands the power which you delegated to us; purify it, regulate and reſtrict it; and from the ſovereignty of the People, if the People wills it, we will again receive it. Parliament of Ireland, act thus, and the people *will* oppoſe an Union—Expunge from your Statutes thoſe ſanguinary proſcriptions; and a generous People will eraſe from their remembrance, the recollection that they ever exiſted, from their boſoms, the feelings which they have excited—Do this, and you will ſtand; if you do not, you ſink?

I tell the Parliament of Ireland, that they muſt depend either on the People or on the Miniſter—I tell them, that if they adhere to the one, they may exiſt; if they reſign themſelves to the other, they are annihilated—I tell them, it is not on the adoption or rejection of an Union, their exiſtence depends; it depends on the adoption or rejection of meaſures of ſound policy and enlightened humanity—I tell them, that if they do not receive invigoration from the ſpirit of their country, they will ſink cyphers in the hand of an arbitrary Miniſter—or, if they do not conciliate the affections of their countrymen,

countrymen, they will become victims to their long ſuppreſſed reſentment.

Is Parliament aware of the point on which it has fixed the attention of the country? Does it know to what it leads the minds of Iriſhmen? and that while by the great majority, Union is unthought of, their power of oppoſing the meaſure is an object of ſerious import. The People ſee, that the Miniſter may be defeated; they ſee that thoſe very laws, which are enforced againſt them, are nugatory againſt the higher orders—They ſee the Convention Bill infringed by the very men who framed it; and county meetings called univerſally under the auſpices of Members of Parliament.

If great men have a right to call county meetings, to expreſs their diſapprobation of one meaſure, have not poor men a right to call them, to expreſs their wiſhes for another? Are laws only binding, when they are to reſtrict a people from ſtating their grievances, from demanding redreſs? County meetings ought to be called, the people ought to inſtruct their repreſentatives to examine into their grievances, to redreſs them; to frame a parliamentary reform, on the broad principles of immutable juſtice and univerſal franchiſe; they ought to inſtruct them to addreſs the King, to withdraw his foreign troops, only retained here to intimidate and extirpate. The Parliament will receive inſtructions, they have declared themſelves bound by them, after receiving them, when they coincided with their own wiſhes; will they, becauſe they do not reject them, have they mocked you with a power, that under

under it they may ſhield themſelves from the reſentment of the Miniſter, and will they deprive you of it, when it is no longer uſeful to themſelves? If ſuch is their intention, I maintain that the duration of ſuch a Parliament is not to be wiſhed, nor for this on Union to be reſiſted.

I ſhall not enter into a diſcuſſion of the merits or juſtice of the meaſure; in my mind, there can be but one opinion as to its juſtice; and but one argument for its adoption, neceſſity.—If I was inclined to oppoſe an Union, it ſhould be with the ſpeech of the Engliſh miniſter; in which I cannot find one argument in favour of it, ſave that one to the potency of which I bow, *Force.* When that ſophiſtry which blinds and deceives a nation, cannot adduce one ſolid reaſon for the meaſure, and when the gigantic talents of a Pitt deſcend to adopt the aſſertions (for they do not deſerve the name of arguments) of an Engliſh, Iriſh, Clerk, who will be weak enough to attempt arguing on the merits of the queſtion.

But let the Parliament believe me, when I aſſure them that this meaſure will yet be carried, unleſs ſome better is adopted, that this meaſure, ſo obnoxious to their feelings, ſo hoſtile to their intereſts, will be adopted, let them not flatter themſelves, that becauſe *they* have rejected it, it will be relinquiſhed. It is not the temper of the Britiſh Miniſter, thus to relinquiſh a favourite object. The man who has armed Europe in a war of extermination, who when he ſees ruin recoiling on the aſſailants, and monarchy hurled from her firmeſt

ſeat,

ſeat; purſues ſtill the ſame conduct is not to be affected, or his purpoſe changed by the voice of an Iriſh Parliament.

For what think you, is the daily importation of Engliſh ſoldiers? Is it to ſubdue rebellion, rebellion no longer exiſts and the work of extirpation is nearly over; the Ancient Britons are fully equal to the accompliſhing of that—it is to intimidate—it is to tell you, in a language that it would be ſtupidity not to underſtand, and it is madneſs not to attend to, that the Miniſter of England wills an Union.—

As long as foreign troops are ſpread over your country, as long as they ſwarm in your capital, truſt me an Union is not relinquiſhed, truſt me it is the intention to dragoon you into the acceptance of it; and as long as you, legiſlators of the land, permit, without repreſentation or complaint, force and illegality to ſtalk triumphant through your ſtreets, you cannot wonder if the People doubt your ſincerity, and feel an indifference about your exiſtence.

I beſeech you to conſider, fairly and ſeriouſly, for what purpoſe the Britiſh troops are here; conſider it only with a reference to this meaſure: and to this meaſure alone do I conſider it as refering—What is to be the reſult? Are they meant to protect the freedom of debate, or to deſtroy it? If you reject an Union, are they to ſupport the rejection, or to contradict it? I aſk you, whether it is your wiſh to have them here; and if it is, I will tell you that you are not the Parliament of the country but of the Miniſter, and that you will ſoon ceaſe to be a Parliament. If even in this meaſure of an Union,

you

you mean honeſtly by the People, what have you to fear? Do the oppoſers of the meaſure require protection from the too fervid gratitude of their countrymen? Learn from the exceſs of that gratitude, to eſtimate the feelings of a generous and credulous People. You all know the motives of your own conduct, aſk yourſelves then, to what portion of praiſe that conduct is entitled; and if your motives are not pure, bluſh at receiving it. If they are, return to the boſom of your country, in the ſpirit of regenerated patriotiſm. If you do not give her cauſe to fear you, you will not have cauſe to fear her; you will diſcard your foreign guards; you will rely on the merited affections of your countrymen, and become in reality the repreſentatives of their wiſhes, and the guardians of their rights.

Nor ſhall I dwell more on the advantages which are to accrue to this country from an Union, than I have done on the juſtice of the meaſure; nor do I believe that one advantage will reſult from it, or from any other convention between Ireland and Great Britain, which the Engliſh Miniſter propoſes, and which the Engliſh mercantile intereſt approves of, no convention or community of intereſts ever will be equitably conducted where both parties are not equally able to aſſert their own rights, and to reſiſt the innovations, or injuſtice, of the other. How far our commerce is likely to be foſtered by the hand which has nearly cruſhed it, or our rights attended to by the power which has annihilated them, is not neceſſary to be commented on. I beg my countrymen not to ſuppoſe, that I think the

meaſure

meaſure a good one; no, but I know it to be inevitable. I beg them not to ſuppoſe that I place the ſmalleſt reliance, on the promiſes of equity, and diſintereſtedneſs of the Miniſter. No, but I know that we cannot either reject the meaſure, or inſiſt on the performance of the treaty; I know that our part of it will be ſigned and moſt ſtrictly performed, and that the Engliſh part of it will be filled up, how and when it ſuits the intereſt of the Miniſter. As to the juſtice we are to meet, it will be like that which is ſhown to a child by the guardian who wreſts his all from him while he tells him; I will make youhappy; and gives the child a whiſtle, or a cake. The boy may feel that he is injured, but he muſt *then* ſubmit!

It is ſaid by one party, that Cork will be advantaged, and by the other, that Dublin will be injured. In the great ſcale of national intereſt, it appears to me of little importance, whether Cork, or Dublin, is to be the richeſt city. But I deny that Cork will obtain any durable acceſſion of wealth from the Union, commerce may animate that city, but the wealth which reſults from *that*, will not remain in the boſom of Ireland, it will be poured in the lap of Britain. Should any acceſſion of commerce happen, or an encreaſe of induſtry ariſe, (which I do not admit probable); neither the acceſſion of commerce, nor the encreaſe of induſtry will enrich this country. No, England would baniſh commerce from your coaſts, would ſap the ſource, of induſtry, if ſhe did not know, that to her, reſulted all the advantages.

As to the argument, that Dublin would be ruined; they muſt be miſerably ignorant of the ſtate of Dublin, who ſuppoſe that the reign of ruin would

then commence: who do not know, that ruin has been long an inmate of their capital. Let them ſeek the haunts of ruin, they will find her, not merely deſtroying edifices, they will find her deſtroying man! They will ſee her conſuming the habitation, and the inhabitant! Let them contemplate the ravages of deſolation, in every manſion of miſery in their liberties and their ſuburbs; and they will perhaps feel as I do now; that it is not the deſtruction of ſtone and lime which is to be deprecated, it is the deſtruction, the unalloyed, unobſerved, deſtruction of the human ſpecies, which ought to be lamented!—

The ruin may be more ſtriking and more marked, which moulders the edifices of oſtentation; but to humanity, it will not be ſo awful, nor to political wiſdom ſo important. Should this ruin come, it will but aſſimilate the glaring diſtinctions of the city into one maſs. Splendour will no longer riſe in the vicinity of wretchedneſs, nor miſery curſe the unfeeling luxury which mocks its hopleſſneſs! It has been a misfortune to this country that abundance and want have conſtantly come into contact; they have met with mutual defiance;—they have parted with mutual diſtruſt.—

With reſpect to another objection, that the ſeminary of inſtruction would be deſtroyed, I declare in my conſcience I do not think that if Trinity College, its learning, its illiberality, its prejudices, and its venality were all ſunk together, the country would be injured by it. If from its extinction I could ſee ariſe, the ſimple principle of—do juſtice and love mercy,—I feel that my country would gain. It is not

not ſcience I would wiſh to deſtroy, it is not learning that I would wiſh to limit; but I would wiſh ſcience to be accompanied with liberality, and learning with humanity.

It is not my intention to awaken reſentments, or to excite hoſtilities between any parties; my wiſh ſimply is, to warn parliament of the intentions of the Miniſter, to ſhew them how alone they can defeat them; how alone they can preſerve their own exiſtence; and to prevent the People from placing an implicit confidence in Parliament, if it does not prove itſelf worthy of the truſt. I wiſh to ſhew the People what they have to hope or expect. I wiſh them to prepare their minds for what is to happen: and I entreat the Parliament, and the Corporations, and the County meetings, not to turn the People's attention to a point from which it may not be eaſy to withdraw it. I entreat them to conſider, that thoughby reſiſtance they may not mean any thing; the People would mean much, and that when they frame the public mind to reſiſtance, and lead it up to the entrenchments of Britiſh connection, and ſtop there or march over and reſume their places under Britiſh ſupremacy; the people may not be prepared to ſtop too, they may not have been aware that they are to go ſo far as the intereſts of Parliament ſhall lead them, and no farther. I conjure the People to preſerve their temper, and not to ſuffer themſelves to be deluded with any idea that they can or ought to reſiſt this meaſure. I conjure them to beware of inſurrection; and I do not addreſs them thus from thinking meanly of their ſtrength, I know their ſtrength, I know it from the apprehenſions of Go-

vernment; I ſaw a ſmall portion of it in the late immatured, ill-contrived, ill-conducted and unfortunate inſurrection, without heads, arms, ammunition or diſcipline, ſhake the Government to its centre. I would beg the People to remember that it is the wiſh of the Miniſter to have them in a ſtate of inſurrection that he may have a pretext for this meaſure, it was his wiſh to have them driven into inſurrection before; it was his command to goad them into it; and hence the ſyſtem of unparalleled cruelties which we have witneſſed, and from which I truſt my countrymen have learned to deteſt cruelty,—I truſt that in their ſufferings from the meaſure; they have learnt to abhor the principle, and that thoſe injuries which they have born with a patience and magnanimity unexampled and which never can be exceeded they will not ſeek to avenge,—that they will not ſtain the fair page of hiſtory which records them as a People of Heroes, by making it alſo record them as a People of vengeance.—It was equally the wiſh of the friends of the country, to keep the People from commotion, as it was that of the Miniſter to bring them to it; both felt that partial inſurrection muſt be as injurious to the country, as advantageous to the Miniſter.—Inſurrection has been one of the favourite meaſures of that man; he has tried it in France; he has attempted it in Holland; and he effected it in Ireland—ſteering wide, in his political career, of every principle of avowed and underſtood policy; he aſtoniſhes and awes—bewilders and leads a faſcinated people.—Miniſter of England, you are a great man! while I deteſt your principles and deprecate

your

your meaſures, I admire your abilities!—for fifteen years you have ruled Great Britain—you have converted a fluctuating and delicate ſituation, into a certain and critical one—You have blinded a ſelfiſh nation to their own intereſt, and led them on their own deſtruction—You have paralyzed, or energized all Europe—You have ſent Liberty to the Aſiatic and the Indian—You have perſecuted the ſpirit, and the genius has ariſen to avenge the perſecution—wherever the name of Pitt and the fetters of ſlavery have gone, the Genius of Emancipation has followed.—You have conceived uncommon deſigns—you have attempted them, and they have failed—Man of immeaſurable talents, why have you not learnt that rectitude would have aſſiſted you!—why has not your policy taught you ſometimes to appear to feel like a man—and why has not your reaſon detected the fallacy of your crooked policy!—for fifteen years you have held the helm of Britain, you have ruled her with an undivided and abſolute authority—you have ruled her ill—you have been to England a bad Miniſter—to Ireland, a deſtroying ſpirit—paſſing over the land with devaſtation, ſparing only thoſe whoſe threſholds *were marked with blood*—You have ſought to precipitate her into the gulph which you have formed for England, and you have overwhelmed her in chaos and confuſion---whether to Ireland is to riſe light out of darkneſs, and order from diſcord; yet remains with that Providence, whoſe inſcrutable wiſdom works good out of evil, and often makes the crimes of men, the inſtruments of good to the ſpecies.——

PEOPLE

PEOPLE OF IRELAND——It is not your duty to oppoſe an Union---your duty is to cultivate univerſal good will and mutual confidence, to merge in divine philanthropy---The perſecutions of mutual bigotry---too long have they been retained; too much have we ſuffered from it! it has been an irreſiſtible engine in the hand of power; it has been a peſtilence to the land---blind and willful, we have been led on (not by religion)—religion has retired to weep over the horrors committed in her name---and appeals to her founder, to the founder of univerſal benevolence, from the charge of exciting thoſe crimes—from the miſery of ſupporting the imputation---Not for thee, Lord, not for thy honour or mine are thoſe things done---we teach them not---you practiſed them not. God of humanity diſpel the miſts of bigotry and ſuperſtition; let not your altars be ſtained with blood; let not your worſhip be profaned by perſecution---teach brother to love brother, and man to love man---bury their mutual injuries and animoſities, reſtore the purity of peace and juſtice!---We have been led on by ſanguinary policy; we have worſhipped barbariſm---we have elevated cruelty---and forming to ourſelves the idols of Proteſtant Aſcendancy, and Proteſtant Bigotry, and Catholic Zeal, and Catholic Superſtition; we have deſtroyed the altar, and forgotten the God of Chriſtianity.—Countrymen awake—look back on your deluſion with ſhame—Unite your hands—unite your hearts ---remember that you are men—that you are Iriſhmen—Embrace.

THE END.

BRITISH
21 JY 82
MUSEUM